

**WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
PUBLIC HEARING
AMENDMENTS TO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Town Hall Meeting Room 1
Tuesday September 22, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Roger Gale, Tim Rainville, Peter Ellsworth, Stewart Morse

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Kristi Stabley, Rick Canavan, Paul Gohn, Heidi Gohn, Ed Monroe, Edwin Vonderheide, Ken Hamilton, Bob Packard, Kathy Packard, Bob Frink, Lynn Frink, Marshall Gohn.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Roger Gale at 6:35 PM.

2. READING OF THE CALL: Roger Gale reads the notice of the Call.

The Water Pollution Control Authority of the Town of Woodstock (WPCA) will hold a public hearing in Meeting Room No. 1, Woodstock Town Hall, 415 Route 169, Woodstock, Connecticut, on Tuesday, September 22, 2015, at 6:30 P.M. to consider amendments proposed by the WPCA to the following sections of the WPCA Policies and Procedures:

- 1. Section 2, “What about grinder pumps?” amendment states for properties located within the South Woodstock Sanitation Sewer Project constructed from 1995 through the Spring of 1997, the grinder pump and the lateral connection from the grinder pump to the sanitary sewer main have been maintained by the Woodstock Water Pollution Control Authority. The Woodstock Water Pollution Control Authority shall no longer maintain, repair, or replace grinder pumps or lateral connections when any such property is conveyed or transferred to a new owner beginning with any transfer or conveyance occurring on or after October 1, 2015.**
- 2. Section 8F, “Annual Meeting and Budget Hearing Guidelines” designed to assure the completion of the WPCA Annual Meeting and Budget Hearing Process in a timely manner:**
 - 1. Fiscal year review of WPCA operations, resources, expenditures and revenue,**
 - 2. Preparation of a proposed budget for the next fiscal year,**
 - 3. Presentation of the proposed budget at a public meeting and the**
 - 4. WPCA approval of a final budget and billing rates.**

At said hearings interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications receives. Copies of the proposed amendments to WPCA Policies and Procedures are available for review at the Woodstock Town Clerk’s office.

Dated at Woodstock, Connecticut this 4th day of September, 2015.

**Roger Gale
Chairman
Water Pollution Control Authority**

3. PERIOD OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: **Ed Monroe** of 21 Ellen Lane: Ed asked the board why do the Policies and Procedures need to change? It was the understanding when residences of Woodstock were forced to hook up to the town sewer that the WPCA would take care of the system. If the home owner misuses the grinder pump it will be the responsibility of the home owner to bear the repair expense anyway. So where is the WPCA recouping money? In 20 years that I've known this board there is only two people that live in this district and only one that actually pays a sewer bill, Im that one. I was the only one who served on the WPCA board that actually paid a sewer bill. I say if you want your voice heard then volunteer for these committees.

Edwin Vonderheide of 336 Route 171. Edwin's concern is how this change will effect the value of one's property that has one of these grinder pumps on it? Edwin's concludes with stating that he thinks this proposed change is a mistake to say that individuals will have to bear the expense of repairing the sewer system that is on their property now. Edwin would be willing to pay a premium to the town that would assure him that the sewer system will be taken care of and not be put on his shoulders to bear.

Roger Gale, the WPCA Chairman, explains that this proposed change will only go into affect when a said property is sold. Everyone that currently has a grinder pump will continue to have the grinder pump serviced by the town until the house is sold.

Stewart Morse, WPCA member. Assured that the WPCA will continue to bear the maintenance of the grinder pumps up until the said property is sold.

Bob Frink of 12 Davis Road. Bob asked how can the people who have these grinder pumps be assured that the policies and procedures wont change again during his ownership of his property?

Stewart Morse, WPCA member. The protection that you would have from another change would be that this process that we are all going through at this public hearing would all have to be done again and you as a citizen would be able to have your voice heard.

Bob Frink suggested everyone that has a grinder pump maybe pool money together every year to help each other maintain the grinder pumps as they start to need repairs.

Roger Gale explained that the WPCA did explore many different option that would be in the best interest of everyone with a grinder pump.

Bob Frink said that no one here at this meeting can defend themselves. Meaning that the future person who will be purchasing one of these houses that have the grinder pumps.

Bob Packard from 8 Davis Road. Bob explained that he pays a user fee even though his sewer goes into his private septic. Bos stated that if you take the minimum cost of running the sewer system and spread it over a very small number of homes you end up what we have, the highest costing sewer district in the state. "Anything you can do to systematically over the long run add more users to the system will drop the per unit cost down. That is simple math. Even if you increase that overhead because you are bigger it becomes a lot less painfull to each individual home owner. The WPCA budget and operations process are all geared to right now and not in the forseeable future. There is going to be a sewer authority in the future and if not forever but what we should be looking at right now is looking at what the lowest longterm cost that we can achieve per residential, commercial or how ever you want to do it. So instead of budgeting for right now you really need to start thinking

about policies and procedures in the long run lets say in 100 years will end up with the lowest per unit cost. For example if you have the choice of the whole system able to be run on a gravity system or a mostly gravity system it might cost a little bit more in the short run compared to a pump going up hill. But your on for the longer term solution. All those decisions that were made going right back to the beginning of this sewer authority, were done with the thought of what is the cheapest we can get this done this year and not thinking about the future of the system. The end result is Woodstock has the most expensive sewer system in the whole state. I think you really need to focus on lowering the long term cost and not get caught up in the issue of wheter it's a grinder pump or not. The grinder pump issues has got to be one of smallest long term impacts to this sewer authority that you could come up with. Much more serious is what you did raise which was maintenaicne to the main system, maintence to the big deisel pump which is for emergency purposes."

Roger Gale. Explained that there are regularly scheduled maintenance on the deisel pump that Bob was referring to.

Bob Packard. "Every time you opt for a short term issue or a short term solution you end up causing a problem later on. You need to seriously consider changing the system to an all gravity system. Would it be expensive in the short run, yes. But in the long run it is the cheapest way to run a sewer authority because gravity takes that stuff down hill. The truth is that a lot of the people coming into this area and buying homes are coming in from areas that are more expensive than this area and think this is a real deal. I strongly suggest that these people are not noticing it but everyone that has been here do. Getting more people hooked up to the system is in the best interest of everyone involved. Like for instance if anyone on Woodstock Hill has a failed sewer system force them to hook up. If you ask people and you hold a referendum and they can avoid that expense then they do like if McDonalds coming in, that is human nature. I think sewer avoidance needs to be changed to allow more people to hook up so it will give the system more income and lower the rates for everyone. Find a way to overcome the policy of the sewer avoidance."

Ken Hamilton of 324 Route 171. States his concerns about the possible devaluation of the properties involved. Ken fears that it is going to be hard to sell the properties once the new owners are faced with this added expense. Ken also believes that a mistake was made when his property was forced into a grinder pump system instead of a gravity fed one. He asked that if a mistake was made then this mistake should be fixed.

Ed Monroe. The reason why Route 171 couldn't be a gravity system was because Linemaster was having a problem with their plume and the town would have had to blast to have made the system into a gravity fed system and they couldn't blast because if they did then it might have effected Linemasters water supply and if it did Linemaster said that they would sue. The water supply could have been effected.

Stewart Morse. It was Stewart's understanding that if the town was to blast to allow the sewer line to rest deeper in the ground to allow for a gravity fed sewer line that blasting could have effected and contaminated Linemasters water supply.

Robert Packard. Suggests that the WPCA should be more proactive in the short term fixes even though the expenses would be significantly high to prevent long term fixes.

Heidi Gohn of 40 Ellen Lane. Heidi's concerns are that the problem then becomes like Bob was

saying so if the system doesn't work the most efficiently then costs are higher because now owners have this pump that is needed in order to shoot everything up hill then it becomes a problem for the owners.

Roger Gale. Roger agrees that the problem, if the grinder pump fails would fall onto the new owner. Woodstock would not be the only town that would be subject to this change that the WPCA are proposing. Surrounding towns such as Ledyard and Putnam have the same system with the owners being responsible for any part of the sewer system that is on the property of the owner such as a grinder pump.

Stewart Morse. Stewart explains that when the WPCA looked into the cost of maintaining the grinder pumps there is a rise in grinder pump maintenance because of the age of the pumps so the WPCA are looking at some method to keep these costs being passed down over the entire system. There is no question that these costs are going to continue to rise from the impact of failed grinder pumps because of age and what not. The WPCA assured that they are doing what they can to minimize costs.

Ken Hamilton. Believes that homes that require a grinder pump are worth less than those that don't.

Roger Gale. Informs the public that a home that requires a grinder pump does not lessen a property's value.

Bob Packard. Believes that the WPCA should look into bringing the entire Woodstock sewer system into a gravity fed system and to get rid of all grinder pumps.

Ken Hamilton. Asks what is the process. What is going to happen next after the meeting?

Roger Gale. Informs the public that a decision will be made during the regular business meeting that is being held right after the public hearing meeting. Then if the board votes the new policy in that the new policy will go into effect on October 1st.

Bob Packard. It is entirely possible that some of the properties that are on this sewer system can now in this day and age can have an engineered sewer system and get off of the town's system.

4. CLOSE OF PUBLIC HEARING: A MOTION BY PETER ELLSWORTH TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. SECONDED BY STEWART MORSE. ALL IN FAVOR.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY TIM RAINVILLE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. SECONDED BY STEWART MORSE. ALL IN FAVOR.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Kristi Stabley
WPCA Executive Administrator